

KANAK ATTAK UND BASTA!

'Kanak Attak' is a community of different people from diverse backgrounds who share a commitment to eradicate racism from German society. Kanak Attak is not interested in questions about your passport or heritage, in fact it challenges such questions in the first place. Kanak Attak challenges the conservative and liberal orthodoxy that good 'race relations' is simply a matter of tighter immigration control. Our common position consists of an attack against the 'Kanakisation' of specific groups of people through racist ascriptions which denies people their social, legal and political rights. Kanak Attak is therefore anti-nationalist, anti-racist and rejects every single form of identity politics, as supported by ethnic absolutist thinking.

Put simply, we reject everyone and everything that exploits, dominates and humiliates people. The field of interventions of Kanak Attak covers critiques of the political and economical circumstances that allow racism to fester, to the culture industries that perpetuate the commodification of racism, to confronting everyday racism, from discrimination to violence, in Germany. We support the fundamental human rights of all people, yet at the same time are critical of notions of 'equality' that means the subordination of difference under one hegemonic culture. We want challenge this domination of a hegemonic culture that ignores racial inequality - whether it is termed "global postmodernism" or a dull Teutonism.

For many decades migrant societies, organisations and initiatives have existed, that have criticised the socio-political situation and desperate living conditions for those denied full entry into the German public sphere. However these efforts and campaigns have been restricted to the very communities they seek to help, leaving the main body politic unchallenged. Kanak Attak is therefore critical of the benefits possible from individual communities lobbying for their particularistic interests, and the non-confrontational mode of politics evident within contemporary democracies. It's high time to stop asking about respect and tolerance without naming the political economic conditions of social inequality.

The End of Dialogue Culture

Although Kanak Attak is a predominantly migrant movement it should not be seen as the 'cool voice' of the ghetto. That's how they would like it, the commercial cultures of the cultural industries, who are searching for 'authentic' and 'exotic' human experiences to be sold to those living in the grey mainstream of everyday German society. Here the figure of the young, angry migrant fits perfectly; the person who endorses the 'out of the ghetto' mythology that assures complacent liberals that German society is meritocratic after all, and which in turn is used to great commercial success by the German music and film industries in falsifying the 'German Dream'.

Kanak Attak also distances itself against a definition of the 'political', that naively suggests that all that is needed is 'dialogue' and 'peaceful cohabitation' of Kanaken and the majority of this society via the "Day of the foreign fellow citizen", displays of folk culture and humanistic campaigns. When the weather is good and the conscience is bad liberal Germans decorate their cars with stickers: 'Foreigners, never leave us alone with the Germans!'. Kanak Attak is not a friend of such multiculturalism. Anyway there are not many supporters of this concept left which never got beyond the status of local policy experiments before mainstream talk turned to the failure of multicultural society. So it was inevitable that claims for integration and assimilation resurfaced. In this atmosphere it was not German society that was examined but the migrants themselves! 'Of course, what migrants lack is tolerance', we were told. And who does not want to 'adapt' (read assimilate) into the open society has no business in enlightened Germany. Yet tolerance is being claimed from a dominant position that does not have to examine its own complicity with subordination, and existing relations of domination are being suppressed. This logic suggests that to talk openly about racism, and to challenge the ethnocentrism and nationalism will only cause more trouble and violence. It could produce prejudice among the majority of Germans. The only racists are the extremists or so we are told. We reject all of this. Racism has to be challenged in all its forms from individual discrimination to violent attacks.

Enter the politics

Kanak Attak challenges fundamentally the status of 'foreigners'. Even if there is a partial granting of civil rights, this would fail to meet our ideas. Without considering it as heaven on earth, if everyone has passports, a right to vote and similar socio-political rights, it is a necessary requirement that everyone receives at least, on a formal level, the same rights. That's why we welcome every attempt to reduce inequality. After all, citizenship is of great significance taking everyday life and sometimes even existential situations into consideration. Last but not least it is better if one can travel around spontaneously and unchecked throughout the EU. This would be a formal-judicial equality and it would help to broaden our thinking about economic and political issues and demands for social equality for all.

Since the last elections a new constellation emerges. The possibility of double citizenship - 'Hosgeldiniz yeni vatandaslar!' 'Heartily welcome new compatriots!' 'Herzlich willkommen neue Landsleute!' (Bild) - undermines for the first time since fascism the fateful bond with the 'folk since birth'. But caution! The process of privileging certain immigrants goes together with the exclusion of others. The dismissive gesture of the red-green coalition concerning the question of immigration, of asylum and the situation of refugees, the ongoing practice to label and criminalise people, and the deportation of 'unpleasant people' via the Foreigners Act speak for itself. All of this aims at an open and subtle separation between convenient, tolerated and undesirable groups, who more or less have no personal freedom.

Whether they appear as Acts and policy statements or through checks in pedestrian precincts, in train stations and on the streets, they all steal time and space from the people. To say nothing of the attacks on life and limb, that are an increasingly everyday reality in modern Germany. This is not only the business of Teutonic jungle law on the streets, but also one of state asylum and deportation practice.

Against contemporary certainties

Racism articulates itself at present mainly in a culturalist form. Likewise in other European countries Islam serves as a space of projection for different kinds of racisms. That's why we think we have to fight against all barriers that prevent recognition of Islam as an equal religious community. For us Islam is no homogenous ideology. One has to divide the everyday religious practice from the organised political Islam. Nevertheless present day Anti-Islamism is one of the key parts to the neo-racist consensus within German society. The false and pseudo-feminist position of German politicians is invoked to defend spurious 'universal' rights. This can be seen in the discourse over headscarfs. At this point even reactionary politicians discover their heart for the suppressed woman, as long as they can pin the blame on Islam.

Another racist form of argumentation that we have to attack is the idea that the 'mixture of people' must somehow be regulated and controlled. This nonsense has spread too far. It hits people through the Foreigners Act in the same way as the person on the door of the club regulates the "right mixture" of people. Those who mean well often point out the so-called pressure that is caused by uncontrolled immigration. But it is not migration that is the problem it is the problems of those who can only think and live in ways that promote bland homogeneity. Even the tolerant and enlightened are looking for a new club if necessary or a new part of town. Others hope for help from the Nazi-Parties or take charge of the law themselves. We claim not only the extension of the civil rights and other privileges to all groups, but put the apparent obvious regulation of 'inside' and 'outside' and the absurdity of dehumanising living conditions that racism promotes into question. Punktum e basta.

Repräsent? - Repräsent!

Kanak Attak offers a platform for Kanaken from different social areas and are sick of the easy switching between cultures recommended by postmodernists. Kanak Attak wants to break the assignment of ethnic identities and roles; the 'we' and 'them'. And because Kanak Attak is a question of attitude and not of heritage, origin, roots or papers, non-migrants and Germans of the 2nd and even 3rd-generation are part of it too. But here as well caution! The existing hierarchy of social existence and the subject positions it imposes cannot be faded out or skipped over with the greatest of ease. Not all constructions are the same. So our project is caught up in the whirlpool of contradictions concerning the relation of representation, difference and the ascription of ethnic identities.

Nevertheless: we compete for a new attitude of migrants of all generations that we want to bring on stage, independently and without compromise. Whoever believes that we celebrate a Potpourri out of Ghetto-HipHop and other clichés will be surprised. We sample, change and adapt different political and cultural drifts that all operate from oppositional positions. We go back to a mixture of theory, politics and cultural practice. This song is ours.

Es geht ab. Kanak Attak!

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